RESUME AND COVER LETTER INFORMATION

General Advice and Information
- Resumes and cover letters are tools to secure an interview.
- Tailor your resume for every application by including relevant keywords from the job description.
- Many companies now use applicant tracking systems (ATS) to manage job applications; the systems scan resumes for keywords and typically work best with Microsoft Word documents.
- Recruiters typically scan your resume for up to 20-30 seconds.
- Proofread and have at least a second person review your resume.
- Cover letters are professional letters and should be used to share additional information not listed on your resume to indicate why it would be mutually beneficial for you and the employer to meet regarding their job opening.

Content
- Always include contact information, work experience, and education; use action verbs to start each statement.
- Replace basic job duties with impactful skills and accomplishments and eliminate words like "responsible for" and "duties included".
- For each experience, include the organization, position title, month and years, and location (city/state).
- Experience can be paid or unpaid. Other experience could include but is not limited to: volunteer, leadership, community involvement, etc.

Formatting
- Typically, 1 page in length; 2 pages with graduate level degree or higher; highly specialized or academic positions may require a CV of 2+ pages with no limit.
- Use 10-12 point, easy to read font. Most utilized fonts include Calibri, Cambria, Times New Roman and Arial. Use consistent size and font.
- Use bolding, italics, all caps to make the important things stand out (Name, section headers, position titles, etc.)

Avoid
- Borders, shading, photos, graphics; Personal information such as age, birthdate, parental or marital status, gender identity, race, hobbies etc.
- Avoid listing vague skills, such as "Good communication skills" or "strong team player." Demonstrate your skills by describing behavioral past examples.
- "References available upon request" and Objective Statements are generally not used; references belong on a second separate page.
- Avoid personal pronouns "I" "me" "my" etc.
- Templates are helpful to get an idea of formatting, but sometimes cannot be read by ATS systems.

Ways to Save Your Document

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- Microsoft Word Document (.doc or .docx) is best for uploading or attaching a resume to an online application.
- Plain Text (.txt) is best for copying and pasting a resume into the text boxes on an online application.
- Portable Document Format (.pdf) is best for emailing a resume directly to a hiring manager or human resources department. Note, some ATS systems cannot read PDFs.
- It is highly recommended to apply directly on the company's website instead of posting a resume on job boards such as Indeed or Zip Recruiter.

Resources
Pick up a Job Search Kit at any library branch.
English Kit
Spanish Kit
Swahili Kit

Visit the Career Specialist at a job seeker drop-in hours, schedule a virtual appointment or call 816.701.3663.

- Digital Learn: If you're new to using computers.
- Job Seeker Wayfarer Tool: Access the resume module for sample resumes, worksheets, and tutorials for writing strong resumes and cover letters.
- JobNow by Brainfuse: Get live, online help and feedback to improve your document.
- LinkedIn Learning: Has helpful resume building video tutorials.
- Job Scan: Optimize your resume for ATS systems. Scan your resume up to 5 times per month for free to see keyword matches and areas for improvement; also check out information and guides for resume writing and building.

Sample Templates
- Cover Letter (with advice)
- Administrative Assistant
- Construction & Maintenance
- Hospitality & Housekeeping
- Manufacturing and Machine Operation
- Restaurant
- Retail
- Student
- Warehouse